#### **CITY OF BEAVERTON**



Community Development Department

**Building Division** 

4755 SW Griffith Drive /PO Box4755 Beaverton, OR 97076 General Information- (503) 526-2222 V/TDD www.BeavertonOregon.gov

# DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT FOR A RETAINING WALL OR FENCE?

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This checklist is intended as an aid to guide you in determining whether or not you need a permit for a proposed project that may include retaining walls and/or fences.

# When do I need a permit for a retaining wall?

- When the height of the proposed wall is greater than four feet measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall. In most instances, this will mean approximately three feet of exposed wall face.
- Any height of retaining wall built adjacent to a structure or parking area where the surcharge of the structure or vehicle parking would be imposed on the wall and/or supporting a slope in grade behind it that exceeds 1:4 (i.e., 1 foot vertical for every four feet horizontal the slope exceeds). This is commonly referred to as a surcharge.<sup>1</sup>
- Any combination fence/retaining wall may require a building permit. In these
  cases, please contact our residential plans examiner at (503) 526-2407.<sup>1</sup>
- Any height of retaining wall where a separate fence is closer to the retaining wall than the height of the retaining wall (i.e., a fence located less than three feet to a three-foot high retaining wall, a fence located less than two feet to a two-foot high retaining wall, etc.).

### When do I need a permit for a fence?

- When the fence is greater than six feet in height from finished grade to the top of the fence.
- When a fence is required for a pool enclosure.
- When a fence is in combination with a retaining wall (see retaining wall information above).<sup>1</sup>

# How do I apply for a permit?

See our information flowchart for how to obtain a building permit.

# Please consider the following when making accommodations for the construction of any retaining wall or fence:

- Setbacks for fences and retaining walls or a combination thereof are required to be entirely on the property where the permit for the installation is being permitted.
- If you live on a corner lot or a curved lot, the City of Beaverton Development Code has provisions for vision clearance of roadways that are required to be maintained. For information regarding these requirements, please see attached vision clearance handout, and contact our Planning Division at (503) 526-2420.
- There are requirements for building retaining walls and/or fences adjacent to or within easements and right-of-ways. Most fences and/or retaining walls are not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Requires the attention of a design professional.

- allowed in any easements and/or right-of-ways. For easement and right-of-way information, please contact our Site Development Division at (503) 526-2552.
- There are special setback requirements in the front yards of buildings and near driveways and alleys that need to be observed. For information on these requirements, please contact our Planning Division at (503) 526-2420.
- Drainage piping placed behind your retaining wall will need to terminate to an approved location and will require a plumbing permit. For plumbing permit information, call our plumbing inspection section at (503) 350-4079.
- When landscaping around your house, be sure to maintain grades that provide a
  positive drainage away from and around the foundation. Current code
  application is six inches of fall within ten feet of the foundation.

Even if a retaining wall or fence does not require a permit, the above bulleted items are regulated by code and become the responsibility of the owner to verify compliance with state and city codes.

## When do I need a design professional to design my project?

- A design professional may be required for any project requiring a permit.
- A design professional is a licensed architect or engineer registered to practice in the state of Oregon.
- As noted by the footnotes indicated in this handout. If you still have a question, please call our residential plans examiner as noted below.

If you are considering backfilling or excavating over 50 cubic yards of fill dirt, gravel, etc., call our Site Development Division at (503) 526-2552 regarding permits and City Code requirements.

For questions regarding information in this handout, please call our Building Division at (503) 526-2493, and ask for our residential plans examiner.

For additional information, see our website at: www.BeavertonOregon.gov